

Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building,
Room 2700
Hartford, CT. 06106

Re- OEC/ B-3 Budget

To the Appropriations Committee,

The intention of this letter is for my family and me to express our support for the funding of the Birth to 3 program to stay with the Office of Early Childhood. We truly want the committee to consider the effect that a change to this would have on the children and families who benefit from the B-3 services. Having been through the program with both of our sons, we cannot begin to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for what the staff provided first: **to my children**, for the benefit of their development and the foundation of their mental and physical growth. Second: **to my wife and I**, in terms of the support, guidance, knowledge, and “care” as to how to best help our children.

Within our occupations, my wife and I have spent years on education and training (within our different fields of Healthcare and Education) to become the best we could at our jobs. When we became parents however, we realized that there are no handbooks for being a parent. There is no set guidelines to do the right thing. Every book written, every family member you talk to, and every online resource you may consult is merely a “part” of the process in the development of a child. For us, this was even more significant when our older son was found to have a medical condition thus, affecting his vision which in turn affected his development and progression at the most significant time in his life. Nothing, can prepare someone for that feeling of being lost and wanting the best for your child. The process left us mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausted.

Knowing that the first three years of life are enormously crucial for the development of a child we spent hours, days, and weeks researching practice, consulting professionals, and meeting with doctor after doctor as to where to go from here with his medical treatment. Our most significant need however, was at

home where we were wondering how all of the pieces would come together and “what” to do best benefit our son. It was then a colleague mentioned we pursue the B-3 program.

The next day we reached out to their services with help for our son Ryan. That was truly a turning point for my wife and I but, more importantly for our son. Over the next series of weeks the process began and we started to meet the staff of the Birth to Three program during their assessment of our son. Quickly, a plan developed with the ultimate of communication, explanation, and focus on not only Ryan’s needs but also ours. They truly fit our schedule for his needed speech, OT, and PT needs. While, they also acted as a guide for my wife and I (and even a shoulder to lean on).

Something as simple as changing our routines at home, modifying how we fed, helped, or even entertained Ryan throughout our day gave “us” the hands on support that made him into the student he is today. As well as parents that could best benefit his needs. The information and assistance they gave us was priceless, while everyone within the program (from the office staff, leadership, PT, OT, & Speech) was beyond knowledgeable and professional throughout the process. The time and effort that the staff gave us was more than we could ever expect! I wish more families knew of this program and could benefit from its services.

Looking back, both of my children improved upon every aspect from their first assessment. Ryan, now runs and plays with his peers building upon the foundations set forth from the birth to three program. He has exceeded our expectations with learning, while (physically) we now understand how to work with and improve needs. None of this would have been possible without the help and support of the Birth to three program. Even with my second child (who did not have as significant of a medical diagnosis), they were able to assist and help him develop the skills to put his best foot forward (literally) during his first three years of life. He is also now, a significantly changed student thanks to the assistance of this program.

The wealth of knowledge this program has provided my wife and I is beyond any other parenting resource we could have ever imagined. If anything, we hope that MANY more families can benefit from the Birth to Three program at the high level of which the current program exists. Anything less would be a disservice to the children of our state and all of the families that could benefit from their services. As I mentioned previously: there is NO substitution for that of early childhood development! We strongly encourage you to consider how your decision will impact the children and families in the years to come. We hope that the best interests of the committee are to sustain the quality and professional nature of the B23 program through the appropriate funding to do so.

We thank you for your time and consideration,

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Lewoc Jr.
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